1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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amity with his second; of a second wife who, after a quarrel with the first, poisoned herself with *derris* or 'New Guinea Dynamite'; and of a husband, formerly a village constable, who was so upset by the wrangling of his two wives as to go away and hang himself. But these instances once more are exceptional, and the polygamous household may be said as a rule to be a peaceful one. Very commonly each wife occupies a separate house, and invariably she works a garden area of her own, so that mutual independence does much to prevent friction.

To sum up on the social position of woman we may say that she is nominally and often actually under the control of her husband, but that by virtue of his restraint on the one hand and her powers of personal expression on the other, the married couple usually get on very well together as a working unit. In public life, i.e. in the affairs of clan and village, the woman takes only a small part, but is well contented to have it so. She works longer hours than her husband, but her share of labour is not entirely disproportionate; indeed, the popular belief that women do all the work in a native village while their men-folk sprawl about in idleness is quite mistaken. A fairly systematic investigation in two Aiga villages[1] showed that of a total potential working time, men were idle 50 per cent. and women 33 per cent. On the whole it may be safely said that the position of Orokaiva women—indeed of native women in general—is not so slave-like and degraded as popular sentiment imagines.

The Control of Children. Children become members of the father's clan and naturally assume his clan emblem. They thus belong essentially to the father rather than to the mother. In cases of divorce, for example, it is normal for the child to remain in the custody of the father, unless it be an infant at the breast, when the matter may be waived, though compensation is due to the husband. The case of orphans is similar. Although there appears to be no formal adoption they are cared for in the normal case by the people of their father, being regarded indeed as their property.

[1] *Interim Report on Native Labour*, 1927.

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proper thing to do; it is an elementary virtue in respect of which there are few failures. Of actual greed it is hard to find any evidence: informants quite understand what is meant by the word, yet I never persuaded them to name a man with a reputation for it. No man, I am told, would hesitate to ask for food among his own people, nor for betel and tobacco among outsiders—though to speak truth the asking would probably never be needed; but it appears there are some who go beyond proper bounds and are inclined to impose on hospitality. Such individuals are called *hasiri*, though I do not believe there are many of them; indeed, it was stoutly affirmed in one quarter that there were none except for children, who had a right to be *hasiri*.

For his liberality a man receives a reward of honour; but beyond that—and this should not be thought to disqualify it entirely as a virtue—he constantly looks for an equal return in kind. This is one of the striking features of primitive economics—the return of gift for gift, the maintaining of a balance. The return may be made long subsequently, but it may be called a matter of honour to equal or exceed the original gift; just as it is a matter of disgrace and lowered self-esteem to fail. There can be no question that self-display enters into the primitive virtue of liberality, and it is in respect of worldly wealth that the individual seeks most to display himself. One might almost say that the native made a virtue of wealth and that liberality was compounded of two things—mere wealth and true generosity.

There are many observers of Papuan natives who will be amused at the inclusion of *industry* with the other Orokaiva virtues. While having no practical interest in the amount of work a native does, I cannot in my own judgement absolve him from the charge of laziness; but nevertheless, allowing a relative value to the term, industry is regarded in native eyes as deserving of commendation. The industrious man is *pure-huso*, which means simply expert in or given to gardening, for *pure*, the garden, is the usual scene of Orokaiva labour. A lazy man, in the native sense, is *pure-ambo*, literally one who is not a gardener, and of course the term applies as well to the other branches of work. It is perhaps

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461 as a necessary condition to wealth and the opportunity for display that industry is regarded as worth while. Otherwise the native, who enjoys *peogo* (rest or leisure) more than work for its own sake, might be disposed to discount it altogether. But the fact is that he does not. While loafing occupies a good deal of the Orokaiva day, we do not find any who neglect their work to an extent which in native eyes would be culpable (unless it be a wife in the eyes of her husband); and on the other hand a man who works harder than most is admired for it.

517 While the Orokaiva family is obliged to support itself,
476 and is in the ordinary round of life a working unit, we find numerous instances of a wider co-operation. Such co-operation is seen especially in the earlier stages of gardening, in fencing, in sago-making, and in the hunting or fishing expedition; and the point that claims our attention is that among those who are expected to participate in such undertakings there are commonly no defaulters. I have asked often enough what would happen to a hypothetical defaulter, but such questions seldom meet with a satisfactory answer because one's informants seem almost unable to visualize an unusual situation. It is answered simply that all the able-bodied who should take part will take part; nor can I recall any concrete case of a man deliberately shirking his duty in any major enterprise of the group. This willingness to co-operate or assist is a sufficiently striking native trait which we may call simply *helpfulness*. It is seen most strongly perhaps in war or in minor quarrels, where the native is always too ready to take up the cudgels in behalf of his people or his friend: it is the active aspect of clannishness. One of the reasons why a village is sometimes almost depleted of its young men because they all elect to 'sign-on' for labour in a batch is simply this desire to stand by one another. 'What will happen to our brother', they say, 'when he is set upon by a mob of stalwart Kiwais, if we are not there to help him?' But in all the incidents of daily life the same spirit of helpfulness is apparent: a man is lost, and there is a great turn-out to find him; if he is ill or in distress he is never neglected; if he cries 'Help!' there is an excited

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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true reason is so obvious to the native that he seldom thinks of explaining it. The Rotation of Areas is, in fact, a labour-saving device. With the implements at his disposal—formerly his finger-nails, a stick, and a stone axe, nowadays his finger-nails, a stick, a tomahawk, and an 18-inch trade-knife—it is infinitely more difficult to overcome the dense mass of vigorous weeds and bushes which spring up in the wake of the taro, than to clear away the bush of ten years' standing, with its somewhat meagre trees and straggling underwood. It is the primary growth which the native gardener cannot cope with. What he does is to leave the matter to nature. After a few years the saplings have sprung up and overshadowed the weeds and shrubs, and in due course as the bush develops these latter are replaced by a much thinner and less formidable array of trailers and forest undergrowth. Even in bygone days, when a tree had to be brought down with a stone axe, this light bush was an easier problem than the primary growth; now that stone has been replaced by steel, it is easier beyond all comparison.

Sometimes the village will be almost deserted, while its population—men, women, and children—are together engaged in clearing. The work proceeds with a leisurely persistence, continual conversation, and occasional spells, when the woodman sits on a fallen tree and rattles his lime-stick and chews his betel. Now and again some cheerful worker will burst into song as he wields his axe, a mere bar or two of melody, sung at the top of his resonant Orokaiva voice. In beginning and ending it is strangely abrupt, more like a musical shout or a yodel than a song, and altogether a very good-humoured sound.

Tree felling is for the men; the cutting and dragging aside of undergrowth for the women and children. The heavier trees are suffered to lie where they fall, and will remain till long after the garden has been used and deserted. The lighter timber is stacked in high pyramids to dry for firewood, or else used, end for end, as borders for individual plots. Only the branches, leaves, and

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round about. Natives will ask you politely for an orange-pip when oranges come down from Kokoda with the mail, but I have never yet heard of an orange-tree successfully grown by a native.

Sometimes you may meet a man returning from a journey with a bundle of rooted saplings on his shoulder—bread-fruit or *Ajimo*, the bark-cloth tree—which he means to plant in his garden. Near Dobodura I have seen a plantation of young *Ajimo* trees—perhaps 500—about 10 feet high and somewhat densely planted. The native is prone to plant his trees too closely, especially coco-nut and betel palms. The latter may sometimes be seen in soldierly rows, so close together that a big man could scarcely pass between. On the site of a new village an energetic village constable had made his own plantation of coco-nuts, lined, spaced, and each protected by a little fence against the pigs. Everything reflected credit upon his observation of white men's methods except that his coco-nuts were not more than 12 feet apart.

(*d*) *Tending and Protecting.* While the taro are young they are kept fairly clear of weeds, but once they are fully established work grows slack and they are left to fight their own battle. Weeding, like most drudgery, is mainly woman's work. It is done principally by hand or by trade-knife, and the weeds are thrown aside or hung untidily on the tree-stumps. As there is no implement resembling a hoe, the soil loses the advantage of being tilled and weeded at one and the same time.

There are many degrees of tidiness and untidiness in native horticulture, and, as we have observed, the neglect of *kurokuro* grass is the most serious offence. But a weed-grown garden and its owner are objects of contempt. There is a tale (not wholly relevant but not to be spoiled by omitting the irrelevant) of a young bride, wooed by a ne'er-do-well youth and won by his false account of the large and well-kept garden which is to be hers. She consents to accompany him home and become his wife. Nearing his village they pass through broad expanses of

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flourishing taro with hardly a weed to be seen, and he points to this side and that, telling her that the gardens are his. Very well pleased with her prospects the girl goes out with her husband next morning to help him at his work. This time he takes her to his real garden, an overgrown neglected patch. Sadly disillusioned the poor girl says nothing but sits down to her weeding while her husband at a little distance does the same. Presently she pulls up a weed with a sound which causes her husband to think she has broken wind. He bursts into a loud guffaw, and the girl hangs her head in shame, thinking to herself, 'This new husband of mine is a brute as well as a liar.' After a moment's silence, while the man's back is turned, she takes a stone and flings it into the bush, crying excitedly, 'Look, a wallaby!' He notices the disturbance in the brushwood caused by the falling stone, seizes his spear and dashes off in pursuit, while the girl, taking advantage of his preoccupation, dashes off in the opposite direction to her village, where, to point the moral and make a happy ending, she subsequently marries another.

The native realizes that too great a proportion of the plant's vitality may go into its leaves, and sometimes he will trim them. Before planting the offset the young leaves are invariably snipped off except for one or two. So also with the taro-top. The cook holds a large flat piece of oyster shell or coco-nut shell in the palm of her hand, and with a pushing motion neatly severs the taro-top at its base before proceeding to peel the taro. The stalk is trimmed to a length of six or seven inches, and the taro-top put aside for replanting. The edge of this peeling instrument is dangerously sharp in clumsy hands. The cuscus was once an old woman who sat peeling taro while a dance was in progress. But she kept her old eye fixed in admiration upon her son-in-law, the barnyard rooster, who with his splendid feathers made such a figure among the dancers; and thus, while her attention strayed, the taro-peeler slipped, and she became aware

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a neglector of gardens, to drive him away not only from your garden but from his own. The process is called *batetekari*, 'throwing away the taro', and the word is used not only in the literal sense but for other kinds of sorcery.

8. *Garden Labour*

The Orokaiva words for 'work' and 'garden' are one and the same—*pure*.[1] It has been frequently pointed out that the garden provides the mainstay of the native's life, and requires the greatest share of what hard work he has to do. A rough compilation made in an Aiga village showed that 48 per cent. of a man's work, 43 per cent. of a woman's, were in the garden. But in this compilation the term 'work' was allowed a very wide connotation, and covered a good deal of what the native would himself hardly call by that name. A stricter definition would have made the proportion much higher.

Part of the work is in the nature of routine—the weeding, the replanting of small batches as the taro is used, the felling of a little extra bush, and so on; part is initial work—the felling of a large area and the planting out of all available *bere*, and the construction of the fence. The larger share of the routine falls to the women; the hardest of the initial work to the men. The rough percentages given above do not indicate of course that women do less work in the gardens than men do. Rather the contrary is the case: the wife's working hours are longer both in the village and out of it.

In native horticulture, as we might expect, the immediate family—a man, his wife or wives, and their children—is a self-sufficing unit. When there are two wives it will be usual for them to work on separate plots of the husband's garden. Girls accompany their mothers to work, from the time when they are carried, as small somnolent balls only visible through the meshes of a string bag, until they are buxom damsels who expect to see admirers peeping at them from the bush. Boys may

[1] Aiga, *pure*; Binandele, *bura*.

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241 476 dresses, and with ornaments of shell, pig-tusks, and dogs' teeth, mock offerings to the spirits which are meant to win their goodwill without costing anything. No doubt there would be more enthusiasm about the working bee if these people only had a brew of African beer awaiting them instead of the too sober pleasures of a dish of taro. 241 476 461 The working bee, with its easy-going sociability and slow but cheerful progress, is an excellent custom but not a very striking one: it takes place comparatively seldom and seems on the whole an institution which is not developed to the full extent of its possibilities.[1] Such enthusiasm as does prevail at the beginning has a native way of petering out. Tasks well begun are often unfinished, for the Papuan seems to lack that proper desire to carry his work to the neat, logical, square finish, in which we take so much satisfaction. He works, not for the pleasure of working (as why should he?) but to ensure his food-supply from day to day and a periodical surplus for a feast.

9. *An Improved Horticulture*

241 Having completed a survey of Orokaiva horticulture, I may attempt now to offer some criticisms and suggest some improvements. If this last section should appear to be outbalanced by the rather discursive description which has preceded it, I make the same excuse here as in other reports. The observations of one who is admittedly no gardener, but who has seen many taro gardens, and has, at any rate, eaten a lot of taro, may be worth setting down in full, so that others with an expert knowledge of horticulture may find them useful to build upon, irrespective of the suggestions which follow.

[1] Mr. G. H. Murray, Controller of Native Plantations, has drawn my attention to the concerted methods of tilling practised by many natives on the south coast of Papua, where a number of men will work forward in line with their digging-sticks, and each line of broken ground 'looks as if it had been carefully ploughed'. Descriptions of the same sort of work are given in H. Newton's *In Far New Guinea*, p. 123, and Jennes and Ballantyne's *Northern D'Entrecasteaux*, p. 123. It is not necessary, therefore, to go to Africa for a contrast to Orokaiva methods.